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RECLAIMING
God's Original Purpose
for Your LIFE



MYLES MUNROE

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DEDICATION

To the 7.5 billion people on Earth who stagger under the secret burden of searching for the purpose and reason for their existence.

To the family of humanity lost in the smoke of our collective confusion about why we as living creatures were placed on this planet spinning in space.

To the children and youth of our nations who are disillusioned with the trappings of religion, turned off by the disappointment of politics, and distrustful of the empty promises of science. This book is dedicated to helping you find the greatest answer for your searching heart.

To the religious and political leaders responsible for providing leadership and answers to the peoples of their nations and the world. May this book inspire you to look to the greatest alternative to national and global restoration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A book is never written by an author unless it is first written on the heart and mind of the author by thousands of contributors and influencers in his or her life and then penned through a collaborative effort of many people, who through a corporate process, deliver a product that millions can benefit from. Therefore it is impossible for any author to deserve full credit for any work accomplished.

The contributors to this work extend beyond this present generation, but include some who have gone on to the Kingdom beyond the Earth and others who still add to my growing ideas daily.

First, I wish to thank my friend, Don Milam, who continues to place demand on my untapped potential and to believe in my content to the point that he believes I am a walking library of unwritten books.

Steve, my faithful and dedicated editor, your ability to capture and convey the depth of my thoughts is nothing short of a miracle, and this book would not be released from the incubation chamber of my heart without your skill and talent.

I would like to thank Ruth, my beloved wife, and our wonderful children, Charisa and Chairó (Myles Jr.), for continuing to allow me the time to release the potential of each book and encouraging me to fulfill my purpose by sharing me with others.

ENDORSEMENT

Not only is Myles Munroe a dear friend, but someone who has greatly helped to shape our own understanding of the Kingdom of God. God is calling for us to let go of our fighting, struggling, and contending and simply embrace the truth that the Kingdom of God already reigns and rules in the earth. Pastor Myles' new book, *Reclaiming God's Original Purpose for Your Life* is like a treasure map to the promises of the Bible, teaching us what it truly means to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," so that everything else can fall perfectly into place.

Matthew Crouch
CEO, Gener8Xion Entertainment

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PREFACE

THE world is ruled by dead men. This statement may surprise you, but after a little thought, you would likely agree when you consider that all of the ideologies that serve as the foundations of all governments, religions, and social and civic institutions are built on dead men's ideas. Imperialism, monarchism, socialism, communism, democracy, and dictatorship are all born of ideas cultivated, incubated, and developed by men who, though long laid to rest, still live on in the practice of these ideas in our modern societies.

This book is about this unstoppable power of ideas. Our planet spins under the power of ideas, and these ideas are the source of the conditions on this Earth. Consider this: Every government in every nation is guided and regulated by ideas. All laws and legislation are products of ideas, and the social and cultural standards in all communities throughout the world are results of ideas that societies have embraced as acceptable and thus manifested in social behavior.

This book is about an idea that was introduced to the Earth by the Creator of the Earth and was lost soon after the beginning of the human journey—and has ever since been the object of the search of the human spirit. This idea originated in the mind and heart of the Creator and was the motivation and purpose for the creation of the physical universe and the human species. In this book, we refer to this idea as “The Big Idea” and attempt to prove that this idea is

superior to all the collective wisdom and ideas of human intellect. It is an idea that is beyond the philosophical reserves of human history and supersedes the institutions that have governed mankind since his first human society.

The “big idea” is not a new idea. It has been imitated, disguised, misused, misinterpreted, and misunderstood by mankind throughout history and still seems to elude the wisest among us.

It is the human pursuit of this “big idea” throughout history that produced all the ideologies we have come to embrace, and this pursuit has germinated all the religions on Earth that humans adhere to. This big idea is the only answer to the deep cry in the heart of every human, and only it can satisfy the perpetual vacuum in the spirit of mankind.

What is this “big idea”? The big idea is the ideology that served as the foundation of the first and original government instituted on Earth. It is the divine aspiration, celestial vision, and eternal purpose of the Creator for His creation and humanity on planet Earth. The big idea is the concept of the ultimate governing program for mankind on Earth that provides for all the fundamental needs of humanity and produces a culture that integrates all of mankind’s noble aspirations, such as equality, justice, peace, love, unity, and respect for human dignity, the value of human beings, and personal and corporate empowerment. It is an idea that is superior to and contains all the noble aspirations of democracy, socialism, communism, imperialism, dictatorships, and all religions. It is my hope that this book will unveil the beauty of this great idea that can bring the solutions to all of our earthly problems—such as war, terrorism, crime, AIDS epidemics, child abuse, environmental destruction, culture clashes, poverty, oppression, ethnic cleansing, economic crisis, family disintegration, political and religious corruption, community violence, and the culture of fear.

This book is the result of my own personal struggle for meaning, reason, hope, and understanding of life. I grappled with the inconsistencies, failures, and disappointments of man’s attempts to govern himself and produce the utopia he continued to promise. I was equally distressed and disillusioned by

the promises of religions, as history exposed their massive defects—revealed in their extortion of resources, trading in warfare, destructive human crusades, inquisitions, oppression, complicity in the slave trade, corruption, and more recently, serving as the motivator of terrorism and the annihilation of innocent human life. My hope in science and education was dashed as I saw the advancement of knowledge and technology become the victim of immoral application and abused by power without conscience.

Like millions, I retreated within myself, searching for answers that were not easily available within the structures and institutions that built our human society. This search led me to the most misunderstood man on planet Earth: a young Jewish philosopher who proclaimed a fresh idea that was unorthodox, unfamiliar, and untried, and challenged all of the ideas that were ever conceived by mankind. This unique idea addressed all the needs, aspirations, questions, and longings in the human experience, while exposing all of the defects, weaknesses, unreasonableness, and inferiority of our own ideas. His unique idea is so complete that it encompasses the entire spectrum of individual and national life and provides for the fulfillment of the entire human race and the planet Earth.

This idea is not some metaphysical, nebulous, impractical, cosmic philosophy that could only work in another world or that must be relegated to or preserved for some “after life” experience. Rather, it is a practical, reasonable, reachable, people-friendly ideology that is Earth-ready even though it originates in another realm. It’s an idea that can work for national government, corporate business, civic life, families, and communities. It’s an idea for children, adults, rich, poor, and all in-between.

I believe in this “big idea” so deeply, and testify of its evidence in my own life experience, that I have dedicated my entire life to propagating it and sharing it with every human I encounter.

This idea is not religious dogma or some narrow theological stance that isolates one from the rest of the human family. Rather, it supersedes any religious institutional position and defies the limited boundaries of all other philosophies and ideologies of mankind. This big idea is so pure that it conflicts



with all of our learned theses and leads us to a frontier that appeals to the better nature of mankind.

What is this idea? It's the divine conception of the colonization of Earth by the Kingdom of Heaven—it impacts Earth's territory with the loving culture of Heaven on Earth, producing a colony of citizens who exhibit the nature, values, morals, and lifestyle of Heaven on Earth. This is not a religious idea but a global invasion of love, joy, peace, goodness, kindness, justice, patience, and righteousness under the influence of the heavenly governor: the Spirit of God.

It is the idea that humankind can be restored to the original passion, purpose, and plan of the Creator to extend His heavenly Kingdom to Earth through mankind. The celestial colony of Heaven thus fills the Earth with His divine nature, which is manifested in all human behavior. This is not religion but the manifestation of a government from another realm. What an idea! It's the Big Idea. Join me as we proceed to discover the greatest idea ever to be introduced to planet Earth. Learn why it could not come from Earth, but had to be brought here by the most benevolent King and Ruler—sovereign of a country from another world.



INTRODUCTION

DEATH can never kill an idea. Ideas are more powerful than death; they outlive men and can never be destroyed. As a matter of fact, ideas produce everything. Everything began as an idea and is the result of the conception of an idea. This book itself is the result of an idea, and the paper on which it is printed used to be an idea. The shoes on your feet, the clothes on your back, the house in which you live, the car you may drive, the cup from which you drink, and the spoon you use were all just ideas that were delivered by some human effort.

It is interesting to note, and history has proven that ideas cannot be destroyed. In fact, any attempt to destroy an idea seems to serve only to make it grow and multiply. Ideas that seem subdued or are forced to submerge in one generation will emerge in another generation and impact future ones.

The most difficult thing to fight against is an idea! Philosophically speaking, ideas can never be destroyed by physical weapons such as swords, guns, tanks, nuclear weapons, or biological/chemical weapons. Ideas may have a shelf life but can never be extinct. Why? Because they incubate in a place where no weapon can reach: the mind. If you kill a man, you do not destroy his ideas. Ideas can be transferred and live on for generations.

This is why all ideologies live on no matter what your opinion of them may be. Imperialism, communism, socialism, democracy, dictatorship, and monarchism are all ideas that cannot be destroyed, even though the men who conceived them have died. This is why even the attempts to respond to the specter of terrorism are so difficult! Terrorism is an idea peddled by extremists; this idea is sold, traded, and transferred to the minds of others and becomes the philosophical foundation of the destructive behavior that has become the greatest security challenge of the twenty-first century. How do you fight terrorism? Can a bullet kill an idea? Does terrorism die when a terrorist is killed? How do you win a war against an idea? It is my belief that the only way to defeat a bad idea is with a better idea. Ideas are destroyed by ideas.

It is my conviction that the battle for Earth is a battle of ideas. It has always been a battle of ideas. Throughout history, mankind has fought wars over ideas. The cold war was a result of a clash of ideas, as were World War II and the Korean War. Apartheid was an idea that oppressed human dignity, elevating some humans while discriminating against others; it was basically a clash of ideas about race, ethnicity, and the value of human beings. The tensions between China and the Western culture were the result of ideas. These historical issues and events were all ideological wars.

Perhaps at this point, since we have discussed so much about ideas, it would be helpful to give our attention to defining the concept of an idea. To grasp the full understanding of what an idea is, it is necessary to begin with what we call a precept. The word *precept* is a grammatical construct that incorporates the prefix *pre-*, which means “before,” and the word stem, *-cept*, which means or implies “thought.” Therefore, the word *precept* means “before thought” or the thought before the thought. In essence, a precept is the “original thought” that refers to the foundation thought. When a precept is conceived, it is then called “an idea.” An idea is therefore “a conceived thought” that becomes the foundation of a concept, which then develops into a mental image and produces a product. Therefore, an idea can be, and usually is, the source of creation. Creation is a manifested idea.



When a thought-idea is conceived, it can be cultivated into a theory and emerge as a philosophy. It is at this stage, when an idea can become a philosophy, that it forms the foundation of a belief system. A belief system then becomes the motivator of all behavior and responses to life and environment. Belief also becomes the shade through which all of life is viewed and interpreted. In essence, ideas are the foundation of philosophy, which becomes our way of thinking, our concept of truth, and our belief system, which then produce our lifestyle and mental conditioning.

Nothing is as powerful as philosophy, and the source of philosophy is precepts, which are the ideas we come to conceive and accept. Thoughts control the world, and we become our thoughts. This is the premise on which the ancient king Solomon, over 3,000 years ago, stated: “*For as [a man] thinks in his heart, so is he*” (Prov. 23:7 NKJV). You cannot live beyond your philosophy and belief system. You will only change when your philosophy changes, and your philosophy will only change when your ideas change.



Part I

GOD'S BIG IDEA



Chapter One

THE GARDEN OF EDEN: GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH

EVERYWHERE I go, I am discovering that more and more people worldwide are tired of religion.

Not long ago I was invited to speak at an international “spiritual” conference in Mexico City. It was truly an ecumenical meeting of global proportions. Featured speakers included a leading Hindu Sikh, as well as one of the chief imams of Islam. The Dalai Lama himself was immediately ahead of me on the schedule. The Catholic Archbishop of Mexico was there, as was the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury (from England). I was the only “Evangelical” on the list of speakers.

As my wife and I arrived in Mexico City, we were uncertain as to how we would be received. We needn't have worried. These interfaith folks greeted us enthusiastically with warm hugs and encouraging words. In fact, the woman who was in charge of coordinating everything said to me, “We know you well by reputation. Feel free to speak however you wish. Say whatever you want to say.”

My allotted time slot for speaking was the last on the schedule, about three o'clock in the afternoon. All the other speakers had preceded me, and those sessions were scantily attended. I don't know what word went out about me, but

when it was my turn to speak, the meeting was packed. Seated right on the front row with my wife were the Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim leaders, all decked out in their fine robes.

As I surveyed the large crowd, I thought, *Lord, have mercy!* and then I got excited. I took off my human fear, stepped onto that stage in the power of the Holy Spirit, and said, "Stand up, everybody; we're going to pray. Let's hold hands together and agree by the power of the Holy Spirit." Everybody in that stadium did exactly what I asked. The anointing came upon me with authority, I began to pray, and something hit that arena. All of a sudden, everybody started crying. Except for the sound of soft weeping, the place was very quiet.

Finally, I said, "Be seated." By now it was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop. "Today," I said, "I want to speak to you about God's original purpose and why God made every human being." I knew I had one opportunity to speak the message they all needed to hear. When I concluded my remarks 35 minutes later, the meeting erupted in a standing ovation. Shouts of "More, more, more!" arose throughout the arena. The director came out on stage, clapping and nodding in agreement. "Give them more," she urged me, smiling.

"More?"

"Yes. They want to hear more. Please continue."

So for the next 25 minutes I told them why Jesus Christ is different from Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, and all of the other "founders" of the world's religions. "First," I said, "let me clarify and make it perfectly clear that I am not a religious man. Second, I am convinced that the number one source of all of our problems is religion."

The place was absolutely quiet.

"Third, I am here to represent a Man who was never religious, and whose theology, psychology, and ideology are far above religion. I believe that His thesis on human manners and humanity's future is the only answer we have. After analyzing all of your other presentations, and all of the ideologies that you have presented, I proclaim that His is superior."

Although it hardly seemed possible, the room got even quieter.

“For example,” I continued, “most religions say ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,’ but this great philosopher says, ‘Love your enemies.’” The Muslim imam squirmed in his chair. “I came to talk about what we need the most. We don’t need more religion in the world, because all of us know that we are the problem. What we need is a government in the world, and I have come to tell you about an alternative government. The only one that works is the Kingdom of God. Every single person in this room has misunderstood Jesus Christ.”

I continued on in this vein for almost half an hour and concluded to another standing ovation. Why was my message so well received? Because I didn’t talk about a religion. If I had preached “Christianity,” it never would have worked. Instead, I talked about God, His Son, and His “big idea,” and the people ate it up. Why? Because people are tired of religion. They are tired of something that does not work and cannot answer the deepest questions and longings of their soul. People all over the world are looking for something more.

Our world today is wracked by unrest and violence. War, genocide, “ethnic cleansing,” and terrorism all speak to the violent clash of cultures on an unprecedented scale. At the heart of this cultural conflict lie fundamental, deeply entrenched, and thoroughly differing ideologies that are religiously based. Whenever religion becomes the foundation of a culture, then changing that culture is very difficult because it is based on a belief system. Historically, religious differences have been and continue to be responsible for most of the violent conflict throughout the world. Clearly, religion has failed humankind.

A UNIQUELY BEAUTIFUL IDEA

Religion is man’s idea, not God’s.

God’s original idea is much bigger and much better than anything we humans could ever dream up. And what was God’s big idea? He decided to extend His heavenly Kingdom to the earthly plane, to expand His supernatural realm into

the natural realm. Or to put it another way, God decided to fill the Earth with the culture of Heaven.

How did God bring His big idea into being? In this, as in almost everything else He does, God did the unexpected. Typically, human kingdoms and empires rise—and fall—through war and conquest. Not God's. Because His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways (see Isa. 55:8), God did something completely different. When God decided to bring the culture of Heaven to Earth, He did not use war. He did not use conquest. He did not issue a code of laws right away. No, when God set out to bring Heaven to Earth, He did something much simpler, something uniquely beautiful and wonderful.

He planted a garden.

Although invisible, Heaven is a literal place. It is a Kingdom with territory and a government—God's government. From the beginning, God had a very simple goal: to extend His invisible heavenly Kingdom to the visible Earth. This original intent lies at the heart of the Scriptures. Historically, whenever the rulers of a kingdom or empire have desired to expand its influence or territory, they have done so primarily by one of two means: outright conquest or colonization. As the sole and uncontested Creator and Ruler of all that is, God chose to expand His influence and domain from the spiritual to the natural and from the invisible to the visible by establishing on Earth a colony, or outpost, of Heaven. His plan was to populate this outpost with His own children—human beings created in His own image—who would live by and operate His heavenly Kingdom government in the earthly realm.

Unlike the pattern that would be followed by human kings and rulers throughout history, this original outpost of Heaven on Earth did not consist of an imposing fortress with thick walls, battlements, and stockades, intended to intimidate a cowed and frightened population. No, God initiated His Kingdom on Earth by planting a garden in Eden, a place specially prepared as the habitation for the first human representatives of His Kingdom government on Earth. From this hub of abundance and beauty, they would follow their government's mandate to "*Be fruitful and multiply*" (Gen. 1:28 NKJV), filling the Earth

with their kind and planting Kingdom “gardens” wherever they went. In this manner, like leaven in bread, they would infuse the territory of Earth with the nation of Heaven.

UNDERSTANDING GOD’S ORIGINAL INTENT

The key to understanding humankind’s presence and purpose on Earth is to understand God’s original intent. If we know what God intended in the beginning, we can make better sense of where we are now and where we need to be going.

Intent can be defined as original purpose. It is more important for us to know what a person intended than to know what he or she actually said or did. If we do not properly discern intent, misunderstanding will follow. This is one reason why there are so many confused people in the world: We have misunderstood God’s original intent; we have misunderstood not only ourselves, but also God’s purpose for us on Earth.

Understanding intent gives us the “big picture.” If we see or hear only a small part of the whole, we will misunderstand and draw an incorrect conclusion. God has a purpose for everything He does. All of us who are citizens of His Kingdom are part of His overall plan, but often all we can see is the tiny portion that involves us at any given moment. Regularly referring to the Bible, God’s guidebook for life in His Kingdom, will inform us of His intent, which will, in turn, help us keep the big picture before us.

Intent is also the most critical component of motivation. It is the source of motivation and the reason why someone does something or creates something. Unless specifically stated, however, intent is usually hidden. A good example of this is a work of art by a master painter. Artists rarely state their intent plainly; they let their art speak for itself. For those who take the time and effort to search it out, the intent behind an artist’s work can be discerned from the painting itself. No other explanation is necessary.

As I said before, if intent is unknown, misunderstanding is inevitable. Misunderstanding intent guarantees a waste of time, talent, energy, gifts, and resources. Unless we know what God intended, everything we do will be a waste of time. That is the problem with religion. Religion, at best, is humankind's best *guess* at God's original intent. Most religions focus on trying to get God's attention, which is the wrong approach. We already have God's attention. The key to life and purpose, however, is to get God's *intention*.

Fortunately for us, God has not hidden His intent away in some obscure manner the way an artist might in a painting. Instead, He has revealed Himself and His intent through His creation (sometimes called "general revelation") as well as through His Word (sometimes called "special revelation"). An example of the first is found in Psalm 19:1: "*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.*" General revelation refers to what we can learn about God through observation of His created order. Special revelation has to do with what God reveals about Himself explicitly through either direct statement or manifestation—things about Him that we could never learn or discern on our own. The Bible is full of such statements of God's self-revelation.

In fact, God's original intention is stated explicitly in the very first chapter of the Bible:

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Genesis 1:26-28).

The phrase "God said" indicates that what follows is the expression of the intent that God purposed beforehand in His mind. Whenever God speaks, we need to listen carefully, because we are about to receive His revealed intention.

In this case, we learn about God's intention—His purpose—in creating the universe, the planet we call Earth, along with all its creatures, and especially the human race. First, God tells us what He intended to do: create a species called “man” in His own image and likeness. Then He tells us why: so that they may exercise rulership and dominion over the Earth and all its creatures.

In order to facilitate this, God prepared a special habitat for His human representatives, a “home base” from which they would fulfill His intent and fill the Earth with the culture of Heaven:

Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there He put the man He had formed. . . . The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it (Genesis 2:8,15).

God's original intent was to populate the Earth with humankind, who then would rule and dominate the planet for Him and in His name. It's really very simple.

MADE FOR HABITATION

There are many other references throughout the Bible that also clearly express God's original intention. For example, the Hebrew prophet Isaiah states that God created the Earth specifically as a habitation for humanity:

For this is what the Lord says—He who created the heavens, He is God; He who fashioned and made the earth, He founded it; He did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—He says: “I am the Lord, and there is no other” (Isaiah 45:18).

In God's plan, the Earth has always had a purpose. God never intended to create the Earth and then leave it empty. From the very beginning, even before He formed the Earth, God envisioned it filled with plant and animal life of every variety, all of it overseen and ruled by human beings created in His image and exercising His delegated authority.

One of the ancient Hebrew psalms says, “*The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth He has given to mankind*” (Ps. 115:16). God’s desire was to extend His kingly rule from Heaven to Earth, but He did not want to do it personally. Instead, He chose to create humankind in His own image—spiritual beings inhabiting physical bodies perfectly adapted to inhabit the natural realm. The Earth has been given to mankind. Any religion, therefore, that teaches or emphasizes leaving the Earth to live forever in some other place in the “life to come” misses the point. If we are eager to leave Earth forever to live somewhere else, we misunderstand God’s intent. Although the Bible plainly states that this present world will pass away (see I Cor. 7:31; I John 2:17), it also promises that a new Earth will take its place:

Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind (Isaiah 65:17).

“As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before Me,” declares the Lord, “so will your name and descendants endure” (Isaiah 66:22).

But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness (2 Peter 3:13).

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea (Revelation 21:1).

If God’s original intent—for the Earth to be inhabited—was going to change with the passing of this present world, why would He create a new one? Humankind’s future in the Kingdom of Heaven will always involve the Earth—a recreated Earth.

God’s original intent—and His continuing purpose—was and is to extend His invisible heavenly Kingdom to the Earth, to influence Earth from Heaven through the rulership of His earthly children created in His image. The expansion of a kingdom government (or any government) from one place to another by planting an outpost in that new place is called colonization, and the outpost

so planted is called a colony. Simply stated, God's original intent was to make Earth a colony of Heaven.

I understand that most people today think of colonization in very negative terms, particularly those who have lived under colonial rule, as I have. And with good reason: throughout history almost all human colonization has been characterized by coercion, brutality, greed, exploitation, victimization, and oppression. These traits, in fact, reflect the nature and tactics of satan, the original enemy of humanity, who illegally seized control of God's original garden "colony" and deposed its rightful rulers: Adam and Eve.

Colonization was God's original idea, but unlike the human way of colonizing, His colony on Earth took the form of a garden. As an analogy, a garden shares the same general traits as a colony, but without all the negative baggage. In sharp contrast to the violent and forceful way that human empires expand, God's way was much more subtle. Just as a garden gradually, beautifully, and completely transforms the fallow ground where it is planted, the influence of God's Kingdom on Earth grows gradually and often invisibly until eventually it will fill the Earth, infusing it with the culture of Heaven. Jesus likened the process to the way yeast leavens bread:

The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough (Matthew 13:33).

He also compared the Kingdom to a mustard seed:

What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew, became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches (Luke 13:18-19).

God's ultimate goal in planting His garden "colony" was to fill the Earth with His glory. The glory of God is one of the significant themes of the Bible. For example, God told Moses, "Truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21 NKJV). King Solomon, son of David, prayed, "Praise be to His glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with His glory" (Ps. 72:19). God reiterated this theme to the ancient Hebrew prophet Habakkuk when He

said, “*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*” (Hab. 2:14).

In Hebrew, the word for “glory” is *kabod*, and the equivalent Greek word is *doxa*. Both words mean “weighty,” or a “heavy weight.” More specifically, “glory” refers to the full nature of a thing. God wants to fill the Earth with His full weight, His full and true nature, the fullness of who He is and what He is like. He wants to be on Earth just as He is in Heaven. Psalm 19:1 says that the heavens are filled with the glory of God. He wants the Earth to be filled the same way, by filling it with people who are filled with His nature and His Spirit.

THE RISE...FALL...AND RISE...OF A KINGDOM

Understanding God’s original intent helps us understand the Bible, His written Word. Many people misunderstand the Bible and its message because they misunderstand God’s original intent.

Simply stated, the Bible is about the rise, fall, and rise of God’s Kingdom on Earth. It tells the story of a kingdom established, a kingdom lost, and a kingdom regained. The first two chapters of the Book of Genesis describe the establishment of God’s earthly kingdom under the rulership of Adam and Eve, who God created in His own image and to whom He then gave dominion. Genesis chapter 3 tells how Adam and Eve lost their earthly kingdom, while the rest of the Bible records the working of God’s plan to regain that kingdom and restore it to its former place.

The Bible begins with the Creation of the natural realm—the heavens and the Earth—but even earlier than that, He created and established the supernatural realm, which we know as Heaven, as the invisible center of His power. Heaven is God’s first and original Kingdom. As a Kingdom, with God as its King, Heaven is a country just as real as any nation on Earth, even though invisible. The New Testament Book of Hebrews describes Abraham and other ancient people of faith as “*aliens and strangers on earth*” who were “*looking for a country of their own*” (Heb. 11:13-14). This does not refer to their earthly countries of



origin, to which they could have returned had they so desired, but to another country in another place:

Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them (Hebrews 11:16).

Heaven, therefore, is a country, a Kingdom ruled by a King: God. “King” is the only appropriate title to describe God’s place in Heaven, because no one voted Him into power. God rules His Kingdom by divine right, by right of creation. Because God created all things, all things belong to Him. He alone is the rightful ruler of the universe. Psalm 103:19 says, “*The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.*” There will never be another ruler, because God’s Kingdom is eternal: “*Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever*” (Ps. 45:6a).

Since it is the nature of kingdoms to expand their territory, God decided to expand His invisible, supernatural Kingdom into the visible, natural realm. He created the heavens and the Earth and then planted a beautiful Garden in Eden as the focal point and starting place for His Kingdom expansion on Earth. He filled the Earth with plants and animals of all varieties. Finally, He created a man and a woman—human beings fashioned in His image and likeness—and placed them in the Garden as His Kingdom citizen-representatives to rule on Earth under His overall authority.

Human beings were given dominion over the earthly realm, but God is still King because everything belongs to Him. The psalmist said:

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it; for He founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters (Psalm 24:1-2).

How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth! (Psalm 47:2)

When God created humankind, He gave us rulership over the Earth, but He never gave us ownership. God is King of the Earth, and Adam and Eve were its stewards, imbued with almost unlimited authority to rule in His name.

As the initial outpost of God's invisible Kingdom in the visible realm, Eden was a touch of Heaven on Earth. Everything about it reflected Heaven's culture, government, and ways. Truly, it was paradise. Unfortunately, this idyllic state of affairs did not last long. Genesis chapter 3 tells the tragic story of how a demonic usurper and pretender to the throne, through a combination of subtlety and deceit, gained control of Heaven's earthly outpost. Eden's human stewards, Adam and Eve, were tricked into disobeying their King's command, thus surrendering their earthly dominion and authority. Satan, an unemployed cherub with delusions of grandeur—and God's archenemy—seized control of a domain that was not rightfully his and quickly contaminated it with the poison of his own evil nature. Paradise was lost, and ever since, we humans have longed for the restoration of our lost kingdom.

The next eight chapters of Genesis describe the deepening corruption of human culture, morals, thoughts, imaginations, and behavior due to the sin nature inherited from Adam and Eve, as well as the continuing deadly influence of satan's evil and illegal rule.

Genesis chapter 12 begins the story of God's plan to regain and restore the earthly kingdom that humanity lost. He calls Abraham, through whose descendants He builds a nation of people He calls His own, and through whom He later sends His own Son to the Earth to reestablish His Kingdom on Earth and take it away from the great pretender.

After centuries of preparation, and when the time was just right in God's plans, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born to a virgin and grew up in a low-class family. Because His mission was to reestablish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, it is no surprise that His message was a Kingdom message, a message of colonization, as it were. Jesus' first recorded public words were, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near*" (Matt. 4:17b). His life, ministry, death, and resurrection broke the power of the pretender, restored the earthly kingdom to His

Father, and opened the door for humankind to regain our rightful place in that kingdom.

ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

Jesus taught His followers to pray, “*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*” (Matt. 6:9-10). With these words, He was calling on His Father to once again restore His Kingdom rule and culture on Earth as it had always been in Heaven—and as it had been in Eden at the beginning. What was God’s Kingdom on Earth like? What was life like in Heaven’s earthly outpost, God’s “Garden colony” on Earth?

Essentially, Eden was a direct reflection in the natural realm of Heaven in the supernatural realm. For one thing, *it had land—territory*. Every kingdom must have territory, for without territory there is nothing for a king to rule over. Although invisible, the supernatural realm of Heaven is vast and infinite—much larger than the natural realm visible to human eyes. Eden was a physical realm with physical territory. That is why God did not create man first. He created the Earth first so that man would have territory to rule. Adam and Eve ruled Eden and the entire created order, just as God ruled in Heaven.

Second, *Eden shared a common language with Heaven*. Any nation or kingdom needs a common language or else it will begin to lose national and social cohesion. Adam and Eve shared a common language with their Creator. They conversed openly and easily with Him in a completely transparent relationship and always knew exactly what He expected. All that changed when the pretender took over. Even though all humans spoke a common language with one another for many centuries—until God confused their speech at the Tower of Babel (see Gen. 11:1-9)—they lost their ability to understand and speak God’s language, the language of Heaven. That is why, when we are outside the Kingdom, we do not understand what God says and no longer know what He expects. One characteristic of Kingdom life is that we can speak and understand the language of the Kingdom in a way that those outside the Kingdom cannot.

Eden also shared the laws and constitution of Heaven. These were not written down anywhere, because God had inscribed them on the hearts and minds of the human couple He had created. They knew what He expected and demanded. They understood how He wanted them to live and what He wanted them to do. God's instructions were simple: Be fruitful, multiply, fill the Earth, and subdue it. He placed only one restriction on their activities, and it was for their protection: "*You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die*" (Gen. 2:16-17). Aside from this one prohibition, they were completely free.

In the beginning, *Eden operated under Heaven's moral code.* Every nation must have a moral code, or else the people will become a law unto themselves and do whatever they want, resulting in chaos, disorder, and anarchy. At first, Adam and Eve had no consciousness of a moral code; they lived in perfect harmony with God. There was no lying, or stealing, or murder, or sexual immorality, or any other corrupt behavior that characterizes life in a fallen world. However, when the pretender's trickery and deceit led them to disobey God's one restriction, they discovered immediately the full weight of the Kingdom's moral code as it pressed down on them, producing a deep sense of guilt and shame.

Eden and Heaven also shared common values. Part of being a citizen of any nation is agreeing with the expressed values of that nation. In the Kingdom of Heaven, the most important value is obedience to the will of the King. Through their disobedience, Adam and Eve revealed that they no longer shared the King's values, which is why they had to leave the Garden.

The disobedience of Adam and Eve violated not only the Kingdom's moral code, but also its customs and social norms. All nations and kingdoms have *customs* (unwritten codes of conduct and expectations that have become so ingrained in a people's consciousness that they take on the force of law). They also have social norms (the manners, etiquette, graces, and standards of behavior that are regarded as normative for that society). Violation of those norms causes one to be labeled as "anti-social," and sometimes even as "criminal."



In the Kingdom of Heaven, the King's word is law, and it encompasses both customs and social norms. It is absolute and inviolable. Defiance of the King is not tolerated. Lucifer (satan) and one-third of the angels in Heaven discovered this the hard way when they mounted a coup against the King and were cast out of Heaven for their trouble. Adam and Eve made the same discovery when they found themselves banished from paradise.

In short, as an outpost of Heaven on Earth, the Garden-colony of Eden *displayed the culture of Heaven*. Culture is the culmination of all these elements: land, language, laws, constitution, moral codes, shared values, customs, and social norms. Culture defines a people. It is inherent; it comes naturally, which is exactly what God wants for His Kingdom citizens. He doesn't want us to strive to obey laws written on stone tablets or laid down in books. He wants to write them in our minds and in our hearts so that they will become second nature to us. That way, we won't have to think about living the Kingdom culture; we will simply do it.

By creating an outpost of Heaven on Earth, God wanted to establish a prototype of the original country of Heaven in another territory. Planting the Garden was a particularly apt way for God to accomplish His desire. First, the natural beauty, vibrant life, and abundant fruitfulness of the Garden are visible reflections of equivalent characteristics of God's invisible Kingdom. Heaven is a spiritual country of indescribable beauty, vibrancy, and abundance because it is the center of power for the King of the universe, who is all of those things and more—infinately more.

Second, a garden transforms the land it occupies, turning it from barren soil into a place of beauty, provision, and purpose. In the same way, the Kingdom of Heaven transforms the natural realm, wherever the two intersect, so that the natural realm becomes a true reflection of Heaven.

God's big idea was to reproduce the Kingdom of Heaven in the visible realm by planting a Kingdom outpost on the Earth and populating it with Kingdom citizens who would govern according to Kingdom government, live according to Kingdom culture, and expand Kingdom influence until it filled

and transformed the Earth. Politically speaking, the term for this kind of governmental expansion is *colonization*. As a Kingdom outpost on Earth, Eden was a *colony* of Heaven established by a righteous, just, and benevolent King who is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love (see Ps. 103:8).

But Eden was also a garden. And just as kingdoms expand by transplanting their governments and cultures in another place through colonization, gardens expand through the transplantation of seedlings and cuttings onto new soil and graftings into new plant life. God's purpose was that His Kingdom citizens in Eden—His steward-gardeners—would expand the Garden and the government and culture of His Kingdom by transplanting them wherever they went.

That is still God's big idea—and His purpose for today. God is still in the horticultural business. All Kingdom citizens share a common call and commission from their King to be royal gardeners, sowing seeds and planting “gardens” of Kingdom culture and government throughout the world until “*the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*” (Hab. 2:14 KJV).

ABOUT DR. MYLES MUNROE

DR. Myles Munroe is founder, president, and senior pastor of Bahamas Faith Ministries International. He is also founder and chairman of the International Third World Leaders Association and president of International Leadership Training Institute. He is respected internationally as a best-selling author, lecturer, teacher, coach, and leadership mentor. As a speaker, he has empowered many to discover their personal purpose and develop their true potential. He and his wife, Ruth, have two children, Charisa and Myles “Chairo” Jr. They reside in Nassau the Bahamas.

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